

MVL 49
Summer 2005

Artist:

MERCY ME
MERCYME.ORG

Album Title & Record Company:

MERCY ME LIVE DVD
INO RECORDS

Song Title:

HOMESICK

Study by:

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Theme

Eternity

Objective

By the end of this session, students will have a deeper grasp of what the Bible says about the afterlife.

Warm Up

Start out by playing the game “*Murder in the Dark*.” This game requires the lights being out and preferably a room or several rooms where students can spread out. Students each receive a 3x5 card. They must not show their card to anyone. Explain that the cards will be blank except for the one card (or 2 – 3 if you have a very large group) with the word “Killer.” The person(s) who gets this card will be the only one who knows who the killer is. The lights are turned out and the killer walks around tagging people who are now “dead” upon being tagged. The “dead” people sit on the floor. The game is over when there is one person (except for the “Killer”) left standing. He or she is the winner. Give a squirt gun away as a prize.

Transition

Share a time when you encountered something mysterious or difficult to figure out – maybe a story about exploring in a cave, or getting lost in an unfamiliar place, or experiencing something for the first time and not knowing what to expect. Be honest about your fears during the situation. Then ask students if they have any similar stories to share (or have students selected in advance, if that works better for you). After a few minutes of group storytelling, explain that during this session you will be exploring a subject that makes some feel a little bit “in the dark” – life beyond the grave.

The Video

Hand out the Student Guides and say, “Most people think about what will happen after they die. Facing the reality of death is one of the few experiences that every human being has in common, no matter what era or culture we live in. While God doesn’t reveal everything to us about the afterlife, He does make many things very clear. In **John 14:1-6**, Jesus comforted His disciples by telling them that He was about to die and leave them behind for a while. These verses illustrate the fact that Jesus doesn’t want His followers to be fearful of death. The worship band MercyMe recently wrote a song about

the afterlife during a time when several people close to them had died unexpectedly. The song is called ‘Homesick’ and the lyrics reflect the kind of eager anticipation that Jesus wanted His followers to have with regard to the afterlife.” Play the video.

Transition

Ask students to share what concepts, lyrics or scenes in the song’s video that really hit home for them. These follow-up questions are included on the *Thinking It Through* segment of the Student Guide.

Bible Study

Explain that in the book of Revelation John received numerous glimpses of Heaven itself. John saw what he called the “Holy City, the new Jerusalem” coming down from Heaven after Christ returned to earth. (While this writer personally adheres to a pre-millennial view of eschatology, feel free to refer to your own eschatological convictions concerning the Second Coming). Read **Revelation 21:1-8** together as a group, and ask the students to make mental note of some of the language descriptive of the Heavenly environment. After reading, walk the students through the *By the Book* portion of their Student Guide, or have students break into small groups and discuss the ques-

tions. Be sure to have adult leaders mingle from group to group to make sure the students stay on track.

Conclusion

Say, “As American Christians, we may talk a lot about Heaven, but rarely do we feel homesick about it. This may be because most of our lives are padded with so many comforts that we don’t long for Heaven the way many in the early Church did. Even the poorest Americans live large in comparison to the rest of the world. Think about where we place our priorities. Do the things we spend our time, talents and treasures pursuing reflect an attitude of longing for Heaven? Or do we hoard and lust for all we can as though we can make our earthly existence seem as heavenly as possible? Here’s a challenge: let’s go on a ‘fast’ – for a week we should do without something we really love in order to pay more attention to God.” Discuss that challenge, and then close in prayer.

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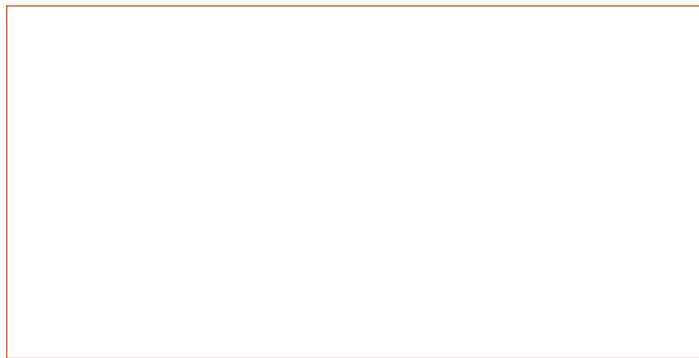
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Thinking It Through

How often have you thought about Heaven or Hell?

When you honestly look at most Christians in our culture, do you get the sense that very many of them are homesick for Heaven? Why or why not?

In **Philippians 1:21**, Paul says, “*To live is Christ, and to die is gain.*” Expand on that in your own words:

Can you love the life you have on earth while keeping a homesick perspective about Heaven?

Where have you received most of your information about the afterlife?

By The Book

Read **Revelation 21:1-8** and discuss the following thoughts and questions as a group:

In the passage, how is the environment of Heaven different from the environment you live in now? How is it similar?

What are the differences between grieving over the loss of a Christian and grieving over someone who did not have a relationship with Christ?

What material things distract your attention from an eternal perspective?

The song indicates that the author lives in such anticipation of Heaven that he actually feels homesick. Do you ever remember feeling homesick? Describe the circumstance and how you felt at the time.

When you think about Heaven and the afterlife, what doubts or questions do you struggle with most?

Conclusion

Can you honestly say that you ever feel homesick for Heaven?

Are you willing to fast from (give up) one of those things for an entire week, replacing the time you spend enjoying whatever it is for time spent seeking God? (Things you could fast from include a source of your favorite entertainment, a type of food, a consuming relationship, etc.).